



Writing Summit Notes

November 9th, 2018

Overall Notes:

- The show is about curiosity and to power kids to challenge their selves, and to ask questions.
- Want to communicate science
- Give kids the tools to know what to do with their curiosity
- Having the kids explore and be curious is important
- Want a gentle and calmness but want it to be fun and silly
- Want kids to think scientifically
- A lot of inspiration from Jorge and Daniel's kids - characters are based off of them
- Core curriculum is social emotional
- Audience is 3-5
- Gender neutral show is very important.
- Things to pay attention to: Humour, Story attention and pacing, Song and music
- The world is a positive place, you should go out and talk to people
- Nail down curriculum at the top of every premise
- Think of the stories first then we'll reference in the curriculum. Better to start a story off just thinking like a kid. Looking to push the envelope. Want to think about the life science piece - animal, plant etc. See Elinor's Town as life science with an engineer bend
- No-one worry about curriculum - we are supported in that way
- Always start an episode off with a question that sparks curiosity - top of our scripts as well
- Pilot episode's pacing was great to learn from
- Think about it as curious kids and adults are asking them "what do you think?"
- Every story will have a science moments - like the Velcro moment in the pilot. Repeatable moments. At the end there will always be a "A-HA!" moment
- There is a love of books baked into this show. Always picture books
- Cut always - ECU - Dig into these for the science points, be imaginative and as visual as you can. You can also do a slow-motion recap. They can have thought bubbles of their own because we want to model brainstorming
- Every episode Elinor has two tag lines: "That's so interesting" "We need more observations"
- A lot of the science questions can't be answered by preschoolers. How is this figured out? We would like to avoid them just asking someone for an answer. We want to be given a bunch of answers and they have to observed figure out which of the answers is right
- Always simplify the science experiment
- The characters can count past 10
- There are pets in the world. There could be a character that cares for animals

- Looking at this show like crabs live at the beach, cactuses live in the dessert. The characters would actually have to travel there to see them.

What makes a PBS Show:

- Want to communicate an Enthusiasm for learning.
- Great stories with real takeaways.
- Smart-funny
- Diversity
- Innovative Design & Format.
- Observational humour.
- No humour at anyone's expense.

Characters:

- Every character is a vegetarian
- We can explore families that are cross-species
- Animals can come from different countries making them diverse as well
- Diversity - the characters think being different is the most fun, cool thing in the world
- Dad is a scientist - Dad has access to tech for them. Dad's the engineer
- Mom - She's the park ranger. She's a naturalists and caretaker of their world. She takes care of environments, she makes sure everyone gets along
- Two Deputy Rangers as cop characters
- Elinor: Energetic, likes to solve problems. she's the girl that finds everything interesting. Looks at the world differently. A curiosity without a filter. Explore the world physically.
- Hazel: interested in books and reading, is organized, she gets in the center of the situation
- Ari: Dramatic, silly, a worrier
- Polar Bear - always uncomfortable
- Arctic Hare - Elinor's cousin
- There will be a librarian character

Setting:

Characters will be exploring more of the town in the show rather than the school and the playground.

Animal Town - welcoming and familiar, exciting and fun. Want kids to want to visit there. Somewhere that feels rich. People walk or bike around. It's a small town, not a real dense urban environment. Houses are not bunched together. It's a lot like 100 acre woods. 3 mains live in their 3 houses. There is a downtown and main street with a library and town square

Elinor's Grandparents will live outside of Animal Town

In our world all the characters are animals. Treat different families as different animal groups, making it diverse

Don't self-censor when it comes to challenging the world we are living in

Technology:

- want it to be familiar and not from another planet but also simple

Songs:

- song in every show. Writers will do first pass on the lyrics

Stories:

3 act structure with all the learning points landing in the right spot

Tomato Drop (Karen) - They observe that the sheep family has a soft landing. First idea is to find something else soft but what? Elinor wants to gather dandelion fluff and put it around the tomato. As they are doing trial and errors - they try a leaf. Could be funny if any of the characters wear socks and they can put it in the sock. They are going to have to put it in a basket with a parachute. Maybe this isn't a school competition? Maybe it's a fun fair. Could work if we get dad involved. Love the visual of Mrs. Hippo parachuting. Can use the dandelion fluff poof up and float down which can also give them the "A-HA" moment. Ari jumps off a rock using his wings and tries without him doing it. They just don't want their tomato to squash there is no loser or winner. There's a ticking clock - the contest is in 15 minutes. Giving each character a specific job to do. Good be a gag where they use Ari - Hazel figures it out they can't use Ari. Crushed tomatoes could be used as ketchup. Ari's wings can serve the purpose of using the parachute or the dandelion.

Ari would feel very special in this episode. "This doesn't look anything like me?!" after he see's the self-made parachute.

Learning experience can be sometimes when you experiment, the unexpected can happen and it can help you solve a problem. Flat things catch the air.

The House that Ants Built (Adam) - The characters don't all have to draw the fort, use blocks, use a though bubble. Thought Bubble - Ari's dream fort. They each have different ideas. The kids witness an ant trying to carry a leaf up a hill by itself, then the other ants help it. Think of fun dream fort ideas - emotions - pretend play. This episode has deeper character development. The ambitions are crazy in this episode. Wouldn't mind if the characters actually have a little fight. Could be cute if she looked out the window and saw just a leaf walking by - it's an ant, Elinor follows it. Can have a little raccoon family helping to grab an apple. Kids can have a fun pillow fight as well. Ants are just carrying the leaf. Ants find their way over to them after they built the fort.

No Need to Shout (Katie) - Put on a play but Elinor can't talk. Some examples of communication - see a dog and it's wagging its tail excited. They realize there are different ways of communicating without talking. Then Elinor would make a play without talking but doing it another way. I think we should show Elinor lose her voice - at a soccer game. She can be on a team - she loses her voice half way through the game and has to learn how to communicate anyway. How will they win the soccer game? They have to start losing after Elinor loses her voice. It doesn't have to be soccer - could be any sport. Elinor learns something from losing her voice - in the end she can let Hazel be in charge. She can observe Hazel drawing and gets the idea to draw to communicate. Lesson: I don't just need to use my voice to communicate.

Why are there so many different kinds of plants (Dave): is this the first time Elinor has been on a team? The could be organizing a new team and having soccer practice and Elinor is

having a bad day. She can realize she's good at strategizing. Elinor doesn't need Ms. Mole to make her observations. Maybe Elinor can be retrieving the ball and notice nature. She notices there are all sorts of different plants with different purposes. She is really good at observing. She gives advice to her teammates. It's about being a part of the team. Everyone contributes something. The plants are contributing to a larger team - like the forest. Science concept is biodiversity and ecosystem.

Special Places (Rachel) - Ari has to be super aggressive about his room - his system is great. He acts like it's not a problem. When other animals have something that's important to them - they put it somewhere special so they remember where it is. They make special spots for all their special things and organize things. He was using the frisbee for something else, Sandwich holder, shovel etc. Sally the squirrel doesn't live in a tree. Maybe you can have a dog burying a squeaky toy - using a shovel. A little bit of tension between cats and dogs. Birds are just birds - they don't talk or have names. Ari's room - his clothes would be on the ceiling, his parents "You told me you'd pick up your ceiling." Ari is in total denial throughout the episode. Ari has a 7 part system how to remember something. Whatever is lost it has to be specific so the audience knows what it is. Flying disk. "One or two places it can be, in my room or not in. my room."

Hiding in Plain Sight (Tom) - You can camouflage by colour, shape or decoration. Ari hides in the same place as he did last time. Elinor hides behind the tree and notices one of the leaves moves, it's actually a bug. She observes the bugs that such good hider because of the shape, they see chameleon that so good at hiding because of the colour. Then they hear a bird and observe it's good at hiding because it's so high. The button can be Ari just keeps hiding. Might have to pick another animal rather than a chameleons. They each have one problem hiding. Maybe take that one part hiding and use what they observe to hide it. Make sure there is a consistent message with all the things the kids observe. Using your surroundings to your advantage. They get to startle the goat twins.

The Science of Staying Warm (Mik) - Can have a fun time with all the gear we put Hazel in. She can have a trunk warmer. Polar bear can come in. Snow day scenario, all the kids are having an amazing time but Hazel is way more bundled. She takes off all her layers - she has to go inside. Polar bear character goes inside and is so hot - talk about the differences of animals who love when it's cold or hot. Go back into family history - elephants come from a warm place. She learns that in the winter she's really cold but in the summer she's more comfortable than other animals. She excepts that she has to wear her jacket - she learns to have a different attitude about it.

Putting on the snowsuit is a huge pain in the butt, it delays it. In the end she's willing to take a little bit of a delay. Arctic Hare can be Elinor's cousin. Polar Bear can be visiting from Norway. He's always sitting by the fan.

Karen Pitch:

Some animals have armour to protect their bodies. Playing dodgeball Elinor gets trucked by a ball. She observes bugs are pretty tough because they have hard shells. They make her rhino suit, Armadillo's make a softer ball. Can substitute dodgeball with riding a bike. it cold be a cumulative - Elinor gets hit multiple times then decides she needs armour. Armadillo's throw themselves.

All of them go for a nature walk and they all hear differently - some have more acute hearing than others. Maybe they can help another friend in the class to hear better. Maybe they can wonder why we have different ears?

Kate Pitch:

Snowy outside. Elinor is doing ballet inside, she keeps slipping. They try to climb the hill but keep slipping, they need to find traction. Get into what prevents the slipping? Ice spikes, leather, shapes?

Patterns episode - seeing patterns on leaves and using it to make art.

Mik Pitch:

School vacation - Ari is worried who will take care of the plants in the classroom. They notice some plants don't need as much work. Episode about making a homemade greenhouse. Ari could have named the plants. He finds out that Ms. Mole is not going to be at the school during holidays. Kids think teachers live at the school. Ms. Mole actually does have a plan to look after the plants in the end. They want it to rain inside - they can use Ms. Mole as a guiding force in this episode. Episode can start Ms. Mole - teaches them about condensation or that there is water in the air. Ari brings in an umbrella.

Idea of two radically different animals can work together. Elinor is put with someone in the class on a group project. They are completely different but end up helping one another in ways they never thought possible. Your strengths make up for my weaknesses and vice versa. Could be a sloth.

Tom Pitch:

Ari starts to second guess himself - is he a bird? Is he a bug? You can have a lot of things in common with something but not be it. Maybe he wants to be something else. Maybe I am a bird! His parents like eating olives and he doesn't - that's what makes him think he's not a bat. The audience will learn why a bat is a bat. We can try Elinor or Hazel who push him a bit to second guess? Bring in a natural design element in there. Would be nice if there was another layer to this story - to add in a twist or put in some heart with his family.

Story about rain. Elinor saving rain for later. They run outside to catch some rain. They catch water off the roof. There needs to be a reason why they want to catch the rain - wet the sand for sandcastles, have to catch the rain while it's still raining. They want to help Elinor's mom out.

Dave Pitch:

A book scares the fur out of characters. Kids start losing their fur but really because it's summer. They misunderstand it, they think they are like cursed. There might be some anxiety problems about kids losing their hair from stress? Would need to treat it in a funny lighthearted way. Might be fun as a Halloween story. The message of showing that this is natural and that it's their bodies. Would need to establish that it's warm. Larger message is you're adapting to your environment. An animal can lose their teeth - maybe a dog.

About smells - the class goes to see a rare plant - it smells bad. Why are there bad smells? A lot of them serve a purpose. Rotten food tells you it's not safe to eat it. Could be Ari has to throw out the garbage. Need to figure out how that can solve something for them. Maybe it's just why do things smell. Every smell smells different to every animal good or bad. Ari doesn't like the smell of rotten apples - a deer can eat them.

Adam Pitch:

Observe a tree and to draw it. Elinor tries to draw the veins of a leaf. Trail and error - window, mirror, Ms. Mole glasses, see's water droplet on a leaf. Uses water to magnify the leaf. Need to show how a magnifying glass works at the beginning. She has her magnifying glass then loses it - she then uses a natural one. Maybe this one we can call in Dad.

Plants can move all by themselves. The mystery. Have a patch of sunflowers, then it's a better visual. They'll do whatever they need to do to get sun. They try to work out how it can happen. Need a detective arena. They can have some fun in the pool and be watching the sun - sunscreen. People are enjoying the sun. People are following the sun to stay warm.

Class assignment - each given a piece of wood and wheels - all about experimenting with shapes. How to make it faster. Then they observe nature and steal ideas to make their cars go faster.

Rachel Pitch:

Ms. Mole loses her glasses but uses her there senses to "See"

Wombat Pouch: Elinor's parents leave and she wishes she could go and be in their pouch like the wombats. Would have to open with wombats. Asking her mom and dad for a piggyback everywhere. Or another approach would be to use the pouch for something else? She makes her own pouch.